

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5187

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EC

SUBJECT: REPLY OF ECUADOREAN NAVY COMMANDANT TO US SHIP OFFER

REF: QUITO 5163

1. THE REPLY OF RADM VASQUEZ PACHECO (REFTTEL) TO CNO'S LETTER OFFERING HOT-SHIP TRANSFER OF ONE DESTROYER IN FY-76 IN NO WAY REFLECTS THE INITIAL SENSE OF SATISFACTION WHICH VASQUEZ EXHIBITED TO NAVATT WHEN LATTER DELIVERED CNO'S LETTER (QUITO 4934).

2. COINCIDENT WITH RECEIPT OF VASQUEZ'S REPLY, NAVATT HAS RECEIVED OTHER INDICATIONS DIRECTLY FROM HIM THAT HIS IS ONCE AGAIN BEING SUBJECTED TO INTENSE PRESSURE FROM WITHIN THE NAVY TO COME UP WITH MORE IN THE WAY OF SHIPS THAN WE HAVE SO FAR FELT ABLE TO OFFER: NAMELY, TWO RPT TWO DESTROYERS.

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3. I HAVE LONG SUSPECTED AND HAVE SO REPORTED THAT THE ABSENCE OF TUNA BOAT SEIZURES DURING THE 1973-74 SEASON WAS AT LEAST IN PART DUE TO A CONSCIOUS GOE OR POSSIBLY NAVY POLICY OF LIMITING SURVEILLANCE BY THE ECUADOREAN NAVY TO FACILITATE A RESOLUTION OF LONG-STANDING DIFFERENCES WITH THE US, AND PARTICULARLY RESUMPTION OF MILITARY SALES AND TRAINING FOR ECUADOR. IT TAKES LITTLE IMAGINATION TO APPRECIATE HOW UNPOPULAR THIS POLICY MUST HAVE BEEN WITHIN ELEMENTS OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVY, AND ESPECIALLY AMONG ITS YOUNGER AND MORE ACTION-MINDED OFFICERS. THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY PRESSING VASQUEZ TO MAKE GOOD ON THIS GAMBLE AND HE MUST FEEL THE NECESSITY TO OBTAIN TWO DESTROYERS TO RETAIN CREDIBILITY.

4. THIS COULD ALSO PROVE TO BE THE KEY TO HIS PROFESSIONAL SURVIVAL. ANY REPLACEMENT OF VASQUEZ, SHOULD THE NAVY SIDE OF MILITARY RAPPROACHMENT WITH THE US SEEM TO HAVE FAILED, WOULD FEEL SIMILAR PRESSURE--AND PERHAPS BE PERSONALLY INCLINED--TO TAKE A MUCH HARDER LINE WITH THE US. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT, IN A MILITARY GOVERNMENT WHERE THE NAVY HAS A LEADING POLICY ROLE IN SUCH IMPORTANT ISSUES AS HYDROCARBONS, NARCOTICS AND LOS/FISHERIES, OUR INTERESTS COULD ONLY STAND TO SUFFER. A FORESHADOWING OF THIS IS CONTAINED IN VASQUEZ'S CONTINUED LACK OF INTEREST (REPEATED PERSONALLY TO THE NAVATT ON AUGUST 5) IN OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION UNTIL HE GETS HIS SHIPS AND THUS HAS CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF A POLICY PAYOFF.

5. ALSO OF NOTE IN VASQUEZ'S REPLY IS HIS REQUEST FOR A CONVENTIONAL SUBMARINE. THIS IS A NEW TWIST, BUT IS LOGICAL AT LEAST FOR TRAINING PURPOSES IN VIEW OF THE NEW CONSTRUCTION WHICH HAS BEEN ORDERED IN GERMAN SHIP-YARDS. IT APPARENTLY HAS LESS PRIORITY THAN THE SECOND DESTROYER-TYPE SINCE VASQUEZ ADMITTED IN HIS FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION OF AUGUST 5 WITH NAVATT THAT HE EXPECTED ECUADOR WOULD BE PUT ON THE "WAITING LIST" FOR A SUBMARINE.

6. THE QUESTION OF SHIPS FOR ECUADOR IS ONE WHICH HAS BEEN DISCUSSED AT GREAT LENGTH IN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THIS EMBASSY AND WASHINGTON AGENCIES. THERE ARE
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COMPELLING REASONS FOR ACCOMMODATING THE SHIP REQUIREMENTS OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVY, AND I WILL NOT REHEARSE THEM AGAIN. THE GOE IS WELL AWARE OF OUR SHIP DELIVERIES TO OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE HEMISPHERE, THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF WHICH MAKE THEM IN ECUADOREAN EYES DUBIOUS CANDIDATES FOR CONTINUED US LARGESSE. I CAN ONLY REITERATE MY REQUEST AND RECOMMENDATION THAT A FURTHER RECONSIDERATION OF PRIORITIES BE MADE WITH A VIEW TO

ACCOMMODATING ECUADOR'S REQUIREMENT FOR A SECOND
DESTROYER WITHIN THE FY-76 TIME FRAME. A RESPONSE SHOULD
ALSO BE DEVELOPED REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF A CONVENTIONAL
SUBMARINE. IF IT IS STILL THE FACT THAT A SECOND "HOT"
DESTROYER CANNOT BE MADE AVAILABLE IN FY-76, THEN I
REQUEST THAT WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO A SECOND SHIP IN
EARLY FY-77.
BREWSTER

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